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Press Release

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AMHS to assess ferry Lituya's grounding damage

(JUNEAU, Alaska) – The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) is assessing damage to the 181-foot ferry Lituya, sustained after the ship grounded Jan. 30 near the Southeast Alaska town of Metlakatla.

AMHS officials said that they planned to raise the ship from the water onto the dry dock today at 1 p.m. to better analyze the extent of damage.

"We're slowly learning a bit more about the vessel's status after we had a chance to open all of Lituya's voids," said Capt. John Falvey, General Manager, AMHS. "We've done a lot of crawling around, as has the shipyard and AMHS engineers, but we're still in the early stages of our damage assessment."

Due to previously scheduled overhaul projects to the two fast ferries (Fairweather and Chenega), the Columbia and the Matanuska this spring, Falvey was unsure as to a time frame for completing repairs to the ship.

"Right now we're steadfastly determined to repair Lituya and return it to serving those customers between Metlakatla and Ketchikan," said Falvey.

The ship reportedly broke free from its mooring shortly after midnight Jan. 30 at the Metlakatla terminal, drifted and grounded on rocks.

There were no passengers, crew, pets or vehicles aboard the ferry when the incident occurred.

According to Falvey, the biggest hurdle AMHS faces for Lituya's speedy return to the fleet depends on current shipyard and dry dock availability.

AMHS officials expect to have more information and a detailed repair plan in coming days to best determine the time needed to complete the repairs.

More information about AMHS is online at www.ferryalaska.com.

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